

AC-119 Gunship Association Annual Meeting Minutes, Sept. 29, 2012, Four Points, FWB, Florida

1. Association President Gus Sininger called the annual meeting to order at 0830 hours, with Larry Hunter offering the Invocation followed by Gus leading the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Mike Drzyzga presented the Secretary's report.
 - a. Membership increased to 425 members, up in every membership category. We did see a number of annual members switch to life membership.
 - b. Mike indicated 29 members are in arrears by one or two years. He will make an effort, two tries each, to regain delinquent members. We each can recruit new members from those we know, & even get outside 119ers to become associate members. Remainder to all: Please also update the Sec. with any changes in your contact info. – One goal is to increase email communications which is cheaper & easier than postal mail.
 - c. Suggestion from the floor (I did not get the name) to make the Association Web site more interactive – like for completing renewals. All agreed that our Web site can be updated.
3. Doug Wohlgamuth presented the Treasurer's report:
 - a. Expected account balance after this Reunion will to be close to \$18,744. When all expenses are covered, we should have about \$16,000 at the end of the event.
 - b. Gus reports Litho sales are slow: one or two sold this year. Two donated to (Eglin) Armament Museum, nicely displayed on the wall, project completed with help from Tony P - high quality mounting hardware. Members are encouraged to seek out opportunities for donations. Doug indicated that Ron's pistol donation helps with the Raffle returns, & he got a recognition for his special work – allowing raffles to be profitable.
4. Heritage:
 - a. 18th FLTS – Col Kevin Hubert “Hubie” did make extra effort to make a super day visiting the unit. Gus provided an ambitious to-do list, & a great day it was (Fri.) Many clapped hands – great recognition. They will join us Sat evening. At the banquet dinner: their Commander, Lt Col Duke Pope, asked to be called “Duke”, since he does not recognize rank while in Heritage or Association events.
 - b. Al Heuss reported on the 71st: Sgt Delgotto is a great contact & Col Cardoso is still in command. Al visited Cannon AFB. Aside: the AF Museum (WPAFB, OH) will have an AC119 display via Al's efforts. He is getting to know the museum staff. The Original Paintings are relocated to AFSOC HQ, & copies are in the museum. He also donated much his own AC119 material. He hopes to continue contact in the future. April (date?) will have an “opening event” for the display – Mike will include a blast to the membership after obtaining details.
 - c. John Morrow -17th SOS: Col Mularkey replaced Col Zimmerman – he rec'd our coin, Honorary Life Certificate, & other items.
 - d. Col Mac reports: Stinger II –AC-130W, new 73rd SOS, had been recently declassified. Mac went with Bob LaRosa to Cannon, they are operating a Daylight Gunship, >13K AGL, unseen, unheard, 30mm bushmaster gun. 73rd has a Heritage room – eager to build it. A/C at Eglin is broken, so no peek this reunion. If we make Kirkland a reunion – maybe a Cannon visit will be arranged. They have a rare specially made keg of Jack Daniels, with special labels, using classified “Dragon Spear” call sign. Col Mac will raffle two bottles.
 - e. “Doc” Larry Fletcher spoke about “Rustic” FACs. O-2 or AV-10s working Cambodia at night. Nixon's Top Secret organization – he needed info re: Cambodia after we pulled back operations. They have a Book “self-published” & available on LuLu.com – includes great stories of Rustics working with Shadows & Stingers. OV-10 pilot “Rustic 10” Claude Newland wrote it, lots of history. He will be here (Banquet) tonight; Fletch hopes to make him an Associate Member.
 - f. VIDEO tape project– Wayne strongly suggested we all complete a video tape session. He called for Hands-up for those who did not – got a lot of attention. Wayne re-stressed the importance for our legacy to get many more videos completed – go see JP Mac.
 - g. We are encouraged to donate history books & lithos: we have the experience to do it well – still offering a discounted \$20 for those donated.
 - h. Wayne led special recognition to Gus for all his service. Important: the Association needs new ideas, “fresh blood” in the Board. The same 5 Board members can not do it again. We will work on this during the elections of Board Members.
 - i. Everyone is encouraged to share new ideas for future Association activities. Fill-out the SURVEY Form in the hooch & give it to Mike D. Spouses are also getting SURVEY forms. From the Floor: Can the survey also go on the Web site (from Ken Stern) – Yes: Action item B Petrie.
5. “850” at Ho Chi Minh Airport (TSN): Bruce Byrd made another excellent presentation about the status of the only known AC-119 gunship, #53-7850, a K-Model. 37 years on the ground. Reminder/reviewed: There is NO

Association money to be spent. Bruce still believes that 850 could go to a VN museum. VN owns "850" as a spoil of the war. Going forward (the plan): There is a CA aviation museum that will host 850 for free, if it did (somehow) come home. Efforts continue to acquire it. Jim Mattison, PCAM, willing to take it. Money for this work is out there from high-roller collectors. Some mechanics believe it can be disassembled & shipped to USA for reassembly as a display a/c. Some discussion about a "crashed" AC119 in Alaska & remains in the glaciers – this needs to be followed up. From the under-sec DOD – Chuck Williams says "none left" in the world that we know of. Jim M offered to do the searching for Alaska's 119.

6. Wayne: Outreach project – possible 3500 119ers we need to find. We intend to use web search tools that show a 20% + hits/yr for \$40 annual fee. ALSO, Wayne did a communications survey: Newsletters rec'd by members were tallied – who did or did not receive them. The Board will work on sound information distribution process. ALSO, we all need to populate the Alpha roster up in the hooch. Gus said that a column has been added for members to indicate Military ID status(Y/N). This helps us to clear AFB access during "field trips".
7. Air Commando Association (ACA) Fletch reports: New leaders in ACA, publishing quality newsletter/journal. They recently did a Gunship Article & the 119s were left-out significantly. (Ret) Gen Secord, (President) told Fletch he made a mistake. Fletch's goal is to write an article 2000+ words about Gunship III. He has it mostly completed, & now can end the story will be our legacy units. We shall look in future ACA journals for Fetch's story on us 119ers. They are also renovating the building – tossing old stock. We can grab what is of interest.
8. Jerry & Ellen Hester report: San Antonio, 2013. \$110 + tax or less at the Crown Plaza or El Tropicana. Both are OK for hooch with our own supplies. Both hotels are close to trolleys & "river walk". Lots of tourist activities; Alamo, Lakeland AFB, wine country, Old Missions. Possible pre-reunion cruise out of Galveston, if a coordinator steps up. Included is free breakfast & internet. At LAFB's museum is a C119 w/ Bill Petrie's plaque. No October-fest at this time. They will double check contracts & make sure the old boiler plates language are fixed to what we want & need.
9. Wayne's report on Military Cemetery, burial options & headstone. We need info regarding how to work with the VA to get the headstone words correct. Ken Brown, one of our lost air crew members, will get a new headstone based on our efforts for the family. Today we will have a VA presentation discussing broadly burial options in a national cemetery, & processes. Stresses the need to have a DD214, & communication between the Vet & family members. VA offers excellent services.
10. Wayne presented John Hupe -- told us of his 119K model flight, crashed, sat home for 40 yrs. Lee Kyser got the idea to fix it – he contacted a RRC to refurbish it, & they did it superbly John with RRC club help will get the 119K flown again, along with a lot of AV & sound support. The field is off of College Ave., Niceville. We must car pool to the model field, - leave at Noon -- be in front of Four Points. Ev has been showing original flight video in the hooch. This will be combined with today's video, include dubbed in gun firing & 3350 engine sounds. Eventual a DVD with the entire story may be available.
11. Future Reunions:
 - a. 2014. Washington, DC is withdrawn – Too large a risk & many other detracting factors. No Dallas 2014. Col Mac stood up to host, ABQ, get 71st & 73rd to support, At the MCM Hotel, includes free breakfast, would be the 2nd or 3rd week in Sept not to conflict with Balloon Festival, Room rates are wonderful at \$85/night, Fri. may have Kirtland AFB Tour. Hopes are alive to get the current young aviators now to become associate members of the 119ers.
 - b. Moment of silence from LaRosa's report on member wife's death. We need to vote approval for the next reunion: St. Louis is an option. ABQ wins, 58 vs 23.
 - c. Therefore 2015 possible reunion in St. Louis
12. Election of officers for 2012-2013:
 - a. President: Wayne nominated, will accept only if there is a new other Board Member
 - b. Immediate Past Pres. Gus Sininger (requires by-law change)
 - c. Vice-President: Bob La Rosa.
 - d. Secretary: **Mike Drzyzga remains Sec, no vote needed.**
 - e. Treasurer: **Doug Wohlgamuth offered to continue for another year,**
 - f. Board Member at Large: Jim Dunn, Joe Goryl, Jim Mattison all stood up. ALSO requires a By-Laws change
 - g. Change by-laws for i) up to 3 at-large & ii) Immediate Past President, Mike & Wayne
13. Board Meeting called by Gus – Sun. 8:00 am, right here
14. We closed the annual meeting at 1030 hours, & proceeded to have VA presentation.

Respectfully Submitted, Michael J. Drzyzga, Secretary 10/24/2012